Justice and Solicitor General

BUSINESS PLAN 2015–18

ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

This business plan was prepared under my direction, taking into consideration the government's policy decisions as of October 15, 2015.

original signed by

Kathleen Ganley, Minister

THE MINISTRY

The ministry consists of the Department of Justice and Solicitor General, the Victims of Crime Fund and the Human Rights Education and Multiculturalism Fund. Within the department's budget, funding is provided for the following agencies, boards and commissions: Alberta Human Rights Commission, Alberta Review Board, Criminal Injuries Review Board, Fatality Review Board, Judicial Council, Law Enforcement Review Board, Notaries Public Review Committee, Provincial Court Nominating Committee, Rules of Court Committee and Victims of Crime Programs Committee. The Property Rights Advocate Office and the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner have specific legislated functions to carry out independently from the department, but operate through the department in other areas.

Justice and Solicitor General helps ensure that all Albertans can live in safe and resilient communities and have access to a fair and innovative justice system. Working alongside its partners in law enforcement, the judiciary and other stakeholders, the ministry has a direct or shared responsibility, or an interest in, all elements of the justice system in Alberta. Its programs and services help ensure Albertans' security through efficient functioning of courts, corrections and law enforcement. It administers the courts in Alberta, which includes responsibility for the Alberta Crown Prosecution Service, provides information and dispute resolution options for people accessing the court system and provides effective custody and community supervision services. The ministry also supports, educates and trains police commissions and policing committees who oversee municipal police services and has a role to play in delivering legal aid to Albertans, through agreements with the Law Society of Alberta and Legal Aid Alberta.

A more detailed description of Justice and Solicitor General and its programs and initiatives can be found at www.justicesolgen.alberta.ca.

LINK TO GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The desired outcomes and priority initiatives identified in this business plan are aligned with the strategic direction of the Government of Alberta.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Alberta is a young, diverse and growing province. The ministry is committed to an accessible, effective, transparent and efficient system of justice for all Alberta communities.

Safe communities are a top priority for the ministry. Through work with partners in policing, courts, Health and Human Services, as well as communities, a coordinated effort is required to provide security and support to Albertans.

An accessible justice system is one that is fair and transparent. The ministry's work will be grounded in these principles, whether through responding to the efforts of individual Albertans to access the justice system or working with vulnerable communities who are looking for better access to services. The ministry will also work to improve fairness in the system by identifying ways in which to improve the relationship between the justice system and Indigenous peoples in the province.

Albertans want to be involved in creating an open and responsive justice system that works for all Albertans and reflects current values. The justice system is responding to the challenge to innovate, and new ideas are making their way into the legal system including simplifying procedures where appropriate. The ministry is adapting to serve and work with Albertans so they have access to the right resources to meet their needs. Innovative programs and services are required to meet the needs of Alberta's diverse and growing population. This involves finding opportunities to better use resources such as technology.

Albertans have legitimately high expectations about how their government should perform and it is critical that the ministry deliver client-focused programs that are accessible, affordable, efficient and timely. The ministry will work with justice system stakeholders and other government partners to collectively meet the needs of Albertans, giving consideration to ease of access for clients, rather than ease of delivery for government.

DESIRED OUTCOMES, PRIORITY INITIATIVES, PERFORMANCE MEASURES, PERFORMANCE MEASURES UNDER DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Desired Outcome One: Alberta's communities are safe, secure and resilient

Protecting Albertans and supporting safety at the community level is a primary focus of the ministry. Albertans have said they value safe and secure communities. Ministry programs and policies are continuously improved to take a preventative approach to crime and respond effectively to reduce the impact of crime on Albertans, their families and communities. The ministry enhances public safety through custody, supervision and rehabilitative opportunities for individuals under correctional authority. Through targeted programming linking offenders with the services they need to improve their quality of life and community safety, the ministry aims to reduce risk factors and promote protective factors to help communities thrive. The ministry will work collaboratively with other ministries to ensure that Albertans have access to the right services to meet their needs.

Priority Initiatives:

1.1 Together with partners, create innovative policy on community safety issues affecting law enforcement, vulnerable Albertans, including those with addiction and mental health issues, and the justice system.

1.2 Review the structure and program delivery of organized and serious crime enforcement services within the province to ensure they are responsive to community needs, while effectively managing resources.

1.3 Enhance and formalize the processes for information sharing practices between Correctional Services and other enforcement agencies so that intelligence gathered within correctional facilities is shared appropriately to prevent and detect criminal offences.

1.4 Work with partners to enhance policies and programs to rehabilitate and support individuals involved in the justice system, ensuring the services and supervision provided are responsive, coordinated and consistent; and, that they are appropriate given the needs and risks of varying offender populations.

1.5 Work with First Nations partners to develop culturally appropriate crime prevention initiatives.

Performance Measures		Last Actual 2013-14	Target 2015-16	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18
1.a	Percentage of Albertans who feel safe walking alone in their area after dark[1]	82%	n/a	84%	n/a
1.b	Percentage of Albertans satisfied with policing in Alberta over the past 12 months[1]	83%	n/a	87%	n/a
1.c	Number of escapes from secure custody or during transport	1	0	0	0
1.d	Percentage of offenders successfully completing their sentence while on temporary absence without incurring new criminal charges[2]	99.6%	100%	100%	100%

Notes:

[1] Beginning in 2015-16, this measure is based on a biennial survey with targets and results available every other year.

[2] New methodology uses temporary absences revoked due to re-offence rather than temporary absences suspended.

Desired Outcome Two: Alberta has a modern justice system that enables timely and appropriate outcomes

Improving access to justice by focusing on innovative solutions to ensure that the right resources are used in the right cases will help ensure that the adversarial process is available to protect rights in serious cases, while also allowing Albertans access to simpler or better suited means of dispute resolution where appropriate. The ministry is committed to providing alternate dispute resolution processes, expanding and improving case management and examining pre-trial processes and non-court based options with partners and stakeholders. This will improve client outcomes, improve access to justice and allow justice and court resources to be appropriately focused on the timely resolution of serious or complex criminal, family or civil matters.

Priority Initiatives:

2.1 In partnership with the Alberta Courts and other stakeholders, reform the family justice system in Alberta to make it more open and responsive by providing families with coordinated services to resolve disputes without having to go to court whenever possible, and, when court processes are required, making them less adversarial.

2.2 Review ticket processing to improve traffic safety while developing a fair, accessible and sustainable process for Albertans to dispute tickets and ensure that resources are effectively utilized.

2.3 Examine innovative policies, processes and practices for bail/remand, pre-trial supervision and intermittent sentences to focus ministry efforts on supervision of medium and high-risk offenders.

2.4 Explore actions that promote excellence in prosecutions.

2.5 Reduce case processing time by expanding remote court scheduling and improving the electronic flow of information.

2.6 Continue to simplify processes and expand dispute resolution options in Provincial Court to resolve civil claims (small claims) in a timely, cost-effective manner.

2.7 Continue to review opportunities to enhance technology to support the management of individuals under correctional jurisdiction.

Performance Measures		Last Actual (Year)	Target 2015-16	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18
2.a	Percentage of Albertans who agree that fair and impartial service is provided to prosecute people charged with a crime[1]	80% (2013-14)	n/a	83%	n/a

Performance Measures		Last Actual (Year)	Target 2015-16	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18
2.b	Median elapsed time from first to last appearance for a criminal case in Provincial Court and Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta	117 days (2011-12)	116 days	116 days	116 days

Note:

[1] Beginning in 2015-16, this measure is based on a biennial survey with targets and results available every other year.

Desired Outcome Three: Ensuring fair process for Albertans

The ministry is taking a citizen-centred approach to address the needs of those involved in the justice system through the use of technology, simplification of processes and bridging the gap between rural and urban service levels. The priority is to challenge assumptions, processes and systems to deliver services that are targeted, appropriate and cost-effective. Understanding the various components of the justice system and how they interact with other social systems will enable the ministry and its employees to expand availability, streamline services and maximize program capacity.

Priority Initiatives:

3.1 Engage with partners and stakeholders to support improvements in legal aid.

3.2 Improve client awareness and satisfaction of Family Support Order Services (made up of the Maintenance Enforcement Program and Child Support Recalculation Program) through improved client and stakeholder engagement.

3.3 Explore ways to ensure that victims are dealt with in a sensitive (including culturally sensitive) way and that they are supported through the justice system.

3.4 Collaborate with partners to develop a process for the online payment of fines, fees and debts that will be more accessible, user-friendly and timely for Albertans than the current court administration process, and will allow the redeployment of court resources to more serious or complex matters.

3.5 Create and implement a sustainable and innovative infrastructure plan for courthouses across the province that will focus on the needs of Albertans, taking into consideration the increasing number of Albertans who represent themselves in court.

3.6 Implement recommendations from Results-based Budgeting, as appropriate, to improve the ministry's ability to protect Albertans.

3.7 Develop and implement a strategic workforce plan to include succession and talent management, ensuring the right people are in the right place, at the right time to deliver service to Albertans.

3.8 Continue to implement the ministry's information management and technology strategic plan to improve the ministry's ability to deliver services to Albertans.

Performance Measures		Last Actual 2013-14	Target 2015-16	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18
3.a	Percentage of victims satisfied with services provided by employees and volunteers within the criminal justice system	85%	86%	86%	87%
3.b	Maintenance Enforcement Program's compliance rate on cases enrolled, by regular monthly payments	73%	74%	74%	75%

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

Consolidated Financial Statements Basis

(thousands of dollars)	Comparable 2014-15 Actual	**2015-16 Estimate**	2016-17 Target	2017-18 Target
REVENUE				
Transfers from Government of Canada	35,946	**33,530**	33,330	33,330
Investment Income	1,402	**970**	970	995
Motor Vehicle Accident Claim Fees	22,774	**23,600**	24,000	24,500
Other Premiums, Fees and Licences	16,577	**23,253**	23,253	23,253
Fines and Penalties	145,915	**203,507**	209,307	215,307
Maintenance Enforcement	15,189	**14,974**	14,977	15,012
Other Revenue	24,080	**23,800**	29,000	29,808
Inter-Ministry Consolidation Adjustment	(564)	**(525)**	(525)	(525)
Total	261,319	**323,109**	334,312	341,680
EXPENSE				
Ministry Support Services	62,956	**63,277**	60,959	59,459
Resolution and Court Administration Services	204,327	**209,764**	208,451	210,451
Legal Services	55,443	**55,498**	55,371	55,371
Alberta Crown Prosecution Service	97,095	**92,698**	92,811	92,811
Support for Legal Aid	64,310	**66,000**	69,500	69,500
Justice Services	42,788	**43,417**	42,877	42,912
Public Security	479,554	**500,315**	509,640	505,913
Correctional Services	266,244	**267,280**	269,283	269,312
Alberta Human Rights	8,530	**8,424**	8,399	8,424
Motor Vehicle Accident Claims	21,063	**21,237**	21,212	21,162
Victims of Crime Fund	30,144	**33,197**	34,597	36,297
Inter-Ministry Consolidation Adjustment	(308)	**(525)**	(525)	(525)
Total	1,332,146	**1,360,582**	1,372,575	1,371,087
Net Operating Result	(1,070,827)	**(1,037,473)**	(1,038,263)	(1,029,407)
CAPITAL INVESTMENT				
Ministry Support Services	3,690	**1,105**	549	549
Resolution and Court Administration Services	554	**1,000**	1,000	1,000
Legal Services	25	**-**	-	-
Alberta Crown Prosecution Service	171	**-**	-	-
Justice Services	180	**620**	620	620
Public Security	90,023	**67,234**	26,663	7,362
Correctional Services	128	**150**	150	150
Victims of Crime Fund	-	**25**	25	25
Total	94,771	**70,134**	29,007	9,706